



ARCHIVES & HISTORY

General Commission on Archives and History

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

P.O. Box 127
Madison, NJ 07940

Michelle Merkel-Brunskill
Executive Assistant

August 25, 2017

Frankford Plains UM Church
99 Plains Road
Augusta, NJ 07822

Dear faithful congregants,

We have received the completed application for Frankford Plains UM Church located in Augusta, New Jersey. Congratulations! The site has been registered as United Methodist Historic Site Number 537.

We are pleased to add Frankford Plains UM Church to the register and will maintain a file of information here in Madison on the site. We would love to receive any additional items for the file, including materials from a dedication service or other special event, historical data, and photographs.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michelle Merkel-Brunskill

APPLICATION for REGISTRATION of a
UNITED METHODIST HISTORIC SITE
GENERAL COMMISSION ON ARCHIVES AND HISTORY
P.O. Box 127, Madison, NJ 07940; 973-408-3189

Name of Site: Frankford Plains United Methodist Church

Location of Site: 99 Plains Road, Augusta, New Jersey 07822

Authorized as a "United Methodist Historic Site"

By action of: The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey
(Annual, Central, or Jurisdictional Conference)

Meeting at: Wildwood Convention Center

City: Wildwood

State (or equivalent): New Jersey

Date: May 21 to May 23


Signature of President/Chair, Conference Commission on Archives and History


Signature of Conference Secretary


Signature of Resident Bishop

* PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE CONFERENCE RESOLUTION RECOMMENDING DESIGNATION OF SITE.*

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE - FOR GENERAL COMMISSION USE ONLY

No. 537 Received by Michelle Merkel-Brunskill Date 8/17/2017

Additional Data Requested NA By _____ Received _____

\$75 Registration Fee Received Yes Registered 8/17/17 By M. Merkel-Brunskill

Copies of this report sent to: _____

Conference Archives at _____

Jurisdictional Archives at _____

Marker sent to: Left on Mark's desk

Date 8/25/17

Marker installed by _____ Date _____

Description:

Please attach a brief description of the Historic Site and its significance in the history of the Conference, area, and/or general church (100 to 200 words).

Supporting Data and Materials:

If there are published or manuscript copies of articles, pamphlets, books, brochures, clippings, etc. related to the Site, please list these. Please enclose copies of evidence for the General Commission's files.

Photographs of Site:

Please enclose black and white photos of the Site. These should be large enough to discern significant details but not in excess of 8" x 10".

Data on Historic Site:

Date of Original Construction or Event circa 1710

Architect (if any) N/A

Builder (if any) N/A

Original Owner a German Lutheran Congregation, later Methodist Episcopal Society

Present Owner Frankford Plains United Methodist Church

Address 99 Plains Road, Augusta, New Jersey 07822

Telephone 973-702-0334

Approximate Value \$1,300,000

Mortgage (if any) None

Has owner been informed of pending Conference action? Yes

What is the Owner's attitude toward visitors? This is an active church. Visitors are always welcome, especially Sunday Mornings

Access: Describe route to Site from a main road: From Newton NJ take Route 206 north (or from Sparta, Route 15 north) to Ross' Corners (intersection of 206 and 15). Proceed on County Road 565 north and turn left on Linn Smith Road. At the end of the road, turn right on Plains Road. The church will be on the right after .1 mile.

Parking? Yes Handicapped access? Couple of steps

Upkeep: What provision has been or will be made for maintenance? Active church

Caretaker Name Board of Trustees

Address 99 Plains Road, Augusta, NJ 07822

Telephone 973-702-0334

Reception: Is competent guide service available?

Name Sunday Mornings, ushers, during week arrange through church

Address _____

Telephone _____

Is there a charge for guide service? No, this is a church Is a donation expected? No. However a gift to the church is appreciated

Publicity:

The designation "Registered United Methodist Historic Site" will be called to the attention of the following historical agencies:

Local: _____ TBD

State/Regional: _____ TBD

Others: _____ TBD

What has been or will be done to promote it to the public through:

Newspapers: _____ TBD

Radio: _____ TBD

Television: _____ TBD

Other media: _____ TBD

Publicity items (brochures, postcards, etc.) available: TBD

What person or organization will be responsible for an ongoing program of publicity?

_____ Church Council and/or church historian

From whom may publicity be obtained?

Name Church Council and/or church historian

Address 99 Plains Rd., Augusta, NJ 07822

Telephone 973-702-0334

Who will affix the "REGISTERED UNITED METHODIST HISTORIC SITE" marker?

Name TBD by Church Council and Board of Trustees of Frankford Plains UMC

Address 99 Plains Road, August, NJ 07822

Telephone 973-702-0334

When? _____ TBD

What public ceremony will mark the event?

_____ TBD

This report has been prepared by:

Name Walter Jones, Archivist | Donald DeGroat, Vice-Chair GNJCAH

Address 26 Edgewater Dr., Matawan, NJ 07447 | P.O. Box 25, Long Pond, PA 18334

Telephone 732-566-5321 | 570-646-9298

email walaterhjones26@gmail.com | dfdegroat4@aol.com

Date June 5, 2017

To whom shall the marker be sent? (DO NOT use post office box address - shipped UPS)

Name Picked up by either Mark Shenise, John Callanan (chair GNJCAH) or Don DeGroat

Address

Telephone

GCAH
Revised April 1, 2001

Frankford Plains United Methodist Church

The beginnings of Frankford Plains Church originate from late seventeenth century Dutch and German settlers to the frontier of New Amsterdam, the area surrounding Manhattan and counties in what is now Northern New Jersey. By 1710 these settlers erected a log church which welcomed preachers, mostly Lutheran, to bring good news. Nearby is a cemetery for local residents which most likely predates the church. This first church building is referred to as "The Log Church" and thought to be the earliest church building in Sussex County.

Wars in Europe changed the government and demographic of Frankford Plains. The Dutch influence withered when the British won control of New Amsterdam, changing the name to New York, and west of the Hudson River to New Jersey. Additional settlers, arrived, many from England, which led to the erection of a new church building in 1750, replacing the first log church.

After the American Revolutionary War and the growth of the Methodist movement, itinerant preacher travelled these plains, which led Frankford Church Christians to become a part of the Methodist movement. The first pastor licensed by Bishop Asbury was Thomas Merrill, who served during the war under General Washington. He was converted to Methodism when the colonial soldiers over-wintered at Valley Forge. He arrived in 1787. Other early licensed or appointed pastors were L. D. Bently and John Discona, who served in the War with Rev. Merrill.

1787 is considered the starting date of the Methodist Society, the earliest in Sussex County. Other recorded itinerant preachers included Bishop Asbury (1789, in his journal referring to it as "Pepper Cotton," locally known as "Papakating Creek"), Ezekiel Cooper, Jesse Lee, and Robert Strawbridge. Though an early settlement, Frankford Plains was eclipsed by other settlements, roads, railways, and various industries to the South.

But the Society survived and prospered to minister for more than two centuries. In 1810 a third church was erected across the road replacing the 1787 building. This Methodist Episcopal Church was known locally at the "Old Plains Church" and offered a home to many groups to worship. During these decades other Methodist Churches would be built in nearby communities, siphoning some of the distant members

Come 1860-61 a fourth church was built near the third church. The cornerstone was laid in June, 1860, H. J. Hilliard preached at the service. On January 31, 1861, three services were held to dedicate the church and celebrate ministry in a debt-free building: John Scarlett in the morning, William Tunison in the afternoon, and H. J. Hilliard in the evening.

In 1866 Frankford Plains and Branchville were yoked as a charge. Rev. J. H. Runion was appointed pastor, which began a revival; a great revival lasting many months. Of the 176 converts, 142 joined the church. In 1893 Plains Church became a separate charge. Records show that up to 1200 persons attended special services, which might also have been a Quarterly Conference.

Other notable events and ministries would begin, some would end or morph into different ministries. An Epworth League was formed in 1893, lasting until 1960. A community house was added. The brainchild of the woman's group. Countless church meals and socials would be take place in that building. Students from Drew Seminary would minister to young and old. A new

parsonage was dedicated in 1957. A basketball court in 1977, which also became a place for outdoor services and weddings. In the 1960s a donated VW bus would be used to bring people to church and for various children's activities during the summer.

An octagonal public schoolhouse, was built in 1860 on property adjoining the church. This school house educated countless students until converted as a home for ten years, then deeded to the church It would be restored for use as a Sunday School in the 1990s.

Recent laity who entered ministry—lay and ordained—to serve local churches included: Howard Voekler (1964), Herbert Heins (1972), Corrie Mae Aukema Cieslukowski (2005) and Alfred Jaeger (2006). Through the years others served however the names lost in annals of time.

In its varied and inspired history, Frankford Plains United Methodist Church has been beacon for the light of Christ to touch lives around the Plains for more than three centuries. As recorded in the 1985 history, "A long line of men and women have served this church, may[sic] have gone to their reward, many are still active in the Lord's work. Many agree with a writer of the past 'Sure This Is Hallowed Ground.'" (pg. 5)

Bibliography

175th Anniversary, The Plains Church (Augusta, New Jersey) 1985

An Historical Sketch of the Frankford Plains Methodist Church 17190-1960 (self published)

An Historical Sketch of: The Frankford Plains United Methodist Church 1710-1977

Duncan, Robert J. Sr (compiler) Update, the Changing Scene in the Northern New Jersey Conference, 1957-1982, 125th Anniversary Publication (Historical Society of Northern New Jersey Conference: Madison, NJ) 1982

Frankford Plains United Methodist Church Website: franklinplainsumc.org

Hampton, Vernon Boyce, editor, Newark Conference Centennial History, 1857-1957 (The Historical Society of the Newark Annual Conference of the Methodist Church), 1957

Historical Sketch Frankford Plains Methodist Episcopal Church Frankford Plains, New Jersey, 1901

The Frankford Plains Octagonal Schoolhouse: A History (Fourth Edition, September 1995)

Recommendation
**Frankford Plains United Methodist Church, Sussex County, NJ,
Historic Site**

Whereas Frankford Plains United Methodist is one of the oldest, if not the oldest church, in Sussex County, New Jersey with German Lutherans having built its first log cabin church in 1710

Whereas Methodism came to the area through the ministry of Ezekiel Cooper and Thomas Morrell, who organized the Methodist society, which gained control of the church in 1787.

Whereas other early Methodist itinerates who preached at Frankford Plains included L. D. Bently, John Discona, and future Methodist luminaries such as Jesse Lee, Robert Strawbridge, Nathan Bangs, Manning Force and Bishop Francis Asbury.

Whereas the third church building, dedicated in 1809, was well known in the area as the "Frankford Union Meeting House" and the "Old Plains Church," hosted many groups needing a place to worship.

Whereas a multi-month revival under the ministry of Rev. J. Runyon following the Civil War brought up to 1500 worshippers to the church and led to 176 conversions, 142 who joined the church.

Whereas "The Plains Church", housed in the fourth and present church building constructed in 1860, was pastored by many Drew Theological School students, who went to on to serve throughout the Annual Conference, and nurtured many sons and daughters of the congregation, including, Howard Voekler, Herbert Heins, Corrie May Audema Cieslukowski and Alfred Jaeger, among others who entered licensed and ordained ministry.

Whereas The Plains Church hosted "The Great Cornfield Rainbow Revivals" in the 1990s and many of its disciples have participated in spiritual programs, like Walk to Emmaus, and served as lay speakers.

Whereas an octagonal school house, built in 1860 to educated local children, was deeded to the church and restored by the church to be a Sunday School in the 1990s.

Whereas the neighboring cemetery, though incorporated separately, has been associated with the church for over 300 years and contains the sites of the original 1710 log chapel and the second building; a wood-framed meetinghouse erected in 1750.

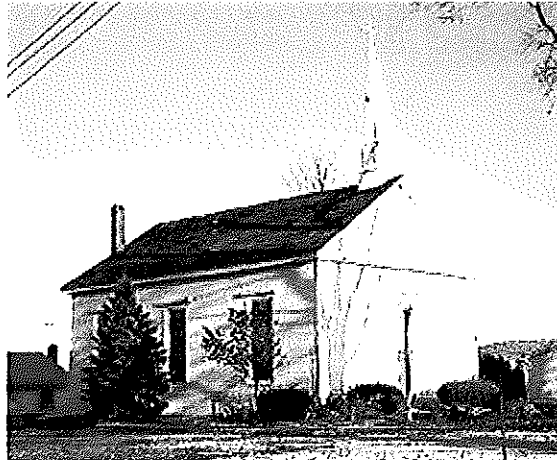
Be it resolved that the United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey recognize the Frankford Plains United Methodist Church as a Conference Historic Site.

Rationale: Frankford Plains United Methodist Church is one of the oldest, continuously active congregations in Sussex County and the Annual Conference. It experienced the preaching of many early Methodist Circuit Riders, including Bishop Asbury, and has served the spiritual needs of the surrounding area and actively nurtured lay and ordained ministry for over three centuries. Its influence has touched countless lives and gone well beyond the borders of Sussex County.

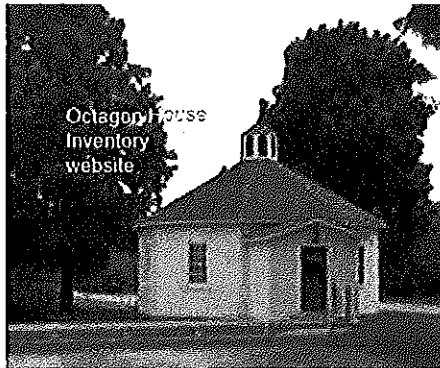
Submitted by:
Rev. John D. Callanan, Chairperson
Commission on Archives and History

copied from pages 48 and 49
Pre-conference Journal

adopted May 22, 2017



Church Sanctuary



Octagonal School House/Sunday School



Sanctuary